

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 482

By Henry

A RESOLUTION To honor the memory of Leah Rose Werthan of Davidson County.

WHEREAS, The members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the death of Leah Rose Werthan, a true visionary in the realm of public service and social progress who unfailingly advanced the greater good; and

WHEREAS, Born on May 9, 1908, Mrs. Werthan was a native of Davidson County and a graduate of Tarbox School, Hume-Fogg High School and Wellesley College; and

WHEREAS, As a young woman, Leah Rose Werthan was well-educated, attractive, and quite athletic, being a former Champion of Nashville ladies' golf; she could easily have limited her activities to raising her family and leisure, but she chose instead to commit much of her life to improving the quality of life for her fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, For many decades, Mrs. Werthan was one of Nashville's most benevolent and selfless citizens; through tireless devotion of her time and efforts, she utilized her substantial talents to support numerous charitable programs and initiatives and founded numerous new ones; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Werthan was a philanthropist of the highest merit; having been richly blessed herself, she strove to share her blessings with those whom life had treated unkindly; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Werthan's devotion to philanthropy was exemplified through her status as a founding member of the Alexis de Tocqueville Society, which represents the highest level of giving to The United Way; a life member of Cheekwood and an active participant in its many activities, she made substantial contributions to that institution's recent capital campaign; she was also a key contributor to the Nashville Family Shelter; and

WHEREAS, Leah Rose Werthan was exceptionally generous in sharing her time and resources through her participation in countless civic and charitable activities; especially concerned with the welfare of the sick and the elderly, she focused many of her efforts in these important areas; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Werthan was actively involved with the Social Action Group on Aging; she also founded Senior Citizens, Inc. and served as a Director of that organization for many years; and

WHEREAS, The Leah Rose Residence for Senior Citizens stands as a monument to Mrs. Werthan's concern for the elderly; it is her signature achievement and most enduring legacy; and

WHEREAS, Through her work with Senior Citizens, Inc., Mrs. Werthan came to realize the pressing need for quality housing for seniors with limited incomes; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Werthan enthusiastically responded to this need, and, through stalwart determination, she overcame numerous setbacks to develop the Residence; and

WHEREAS, Leah Rose Werthan single-handedly coordinated all the organizations and resources that were necessary to ensure success in this ambitious endeavor; she worked through considerable bureaucratic delays; enlisted the support of a respected architect, lawyer, and real estate developer; convinced a number of Davidson County's citizens to provide seed money; petitioned Tennessee's United States Senators and Davidson County's Congressman for support; and spent many hours in sessions with officials of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, in both Nashville and Washington, D.C.; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Werthan's visionary plans came to fruition when the eighteen-story Residence was constructed in 1970; it now provides over two hundred apartments in a safe, comfortable, and attractive environment for low-income senior citizens; and

WHEREAS, In the 1940s, Leah Rose Werthan spearheaded the Nashville Council of Jewish Women's project to establish a home for convalescent children; and

WHEREAS, In the years that followed, she worked to aid the medical community in providing the best possible treatment to the citizens of this State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, This extraordinary humanitarian founded the Dede Wallace Center and was a stalwart supporter of the Bill Wilkerson Speech and Hearing Center; she was a founding Trustee of, and generous donor to, the Nashville Memorial Hospital; and

WHEREAS, Leah Rose Werthan partnered with Vanderbilt University's world-renowned Medical School and Hospital in its ongoing quest to improve the standard of care available to the sick; she was a life member of the Canby Robinson Society, which is the donor Society of the Vanderbilt Medical School; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Werthan joined with her family to establish the Albert and Bernard Werthan Chair in Medicine at Vanderbilt University; she also established the Pulmonary Disease Research Fund in memory of her late husband, Bernard Werthan, Sr.; and

WHEREAS, One of Vanderbilt University's most generous benefactors, Mrs. Werthan was a member of numerous donors' societies at the University, including the Peabody College's Round Table Society, the Divinity School's *Schola Prophetarum*, the Nursing School's Julia Hereford Society, the Institute for Public Policy's Kitchen Cabinet, the School of Music's Blair Patron Society, the Athletic Department's National Commodore Club, and the Jean and Alexander Heard Library Society; and

WHEREAS, Highly respected throughout the Vanderbilt community, Mrs. Werthan was a lifetime member of the Chancellor's Council for the University; and

WHEREAS, An exemplary citizen and public servant, Leah Rose Werthan was the recipient of numerous honors and awards for her many laudable activities; among many others,

she received the Governor's Outstanding Tennessean Award, the National Mental Health Association's Golden Key Award, the Jack Massey Leadership Award, the Senior Citizens, Inc. Crowning Achievement Award, and the Eleanor Roosevelt Centennial Award, given by the State of Israel Bond Committee; and

WHEREAS, In 1970, Mrs. Werthan was selected as "Woman of the Year" by the Nashville Business and Professional Women, and she was chosen as "Philanthropist of the Year" in 1993 by the Nashville Chapter of the National Society of Fund-Raising Executives; and

WHEREAS, Deeply devoted to her family, Mrs. Werthan always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Werthan shared love and companionship with her husband, Bernard Werthan, Sr. before his untimely passing; they were the loving parents of three children, Bernard Werthan, Jr., Joan Blum Shayne, and Morris Werthan II; Mrs. Werthan is also survived by a sister, Edith B. Frankel; and

WHEREAS, She was the proud grandmother of eleven grandchildren: Bernard Werthan, III, Betsy Werthan Schwartz, Anthony L. Werthan, Audrey Kay Werthan, Lauren Blum, Jennifer L. Blum, Emily Blum Haslett, Melissa Lea Werthan, Nancy Claire Werthan, Michael W. Werthan, and Jeremy S. Werthan; and eighteen great-grandchildren: Claire Schwartz, Benjamin Werthan Schwartz, Elijah Bowe, Robert Blum Cotsen, Julia Cotsen, Fiona Sinclair Haslett, Nathaniel Werthan Haslett, Charlotte Elwell Haslett, William Otis Haslett, Ella Werthan, Meier Morris Werthan, Hannah Rose Werthan, Maximillian Kolbe Werthan, Josiah Kolbe Werthan, Sophie Mascoli Werthan, Benjamin Mascoli Werthan, Samuel Leo Werthan, and Molly R. Werthan; and

WHEREAS, Leah Rose Werthan leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life and diligence and dedication in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, Her indomitable spirit and drive were indeed extraordinary, and this State will never know her equal as a community leader; and

WHEREAS, It is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional citizen and exemplary human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we honor the memory of Leah Rose Werthan, reflecting fondly upon her impeccable character, her stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction, and her laudable devotion to using her time, resources, and efforts to perpetuate the greater good in service of her fellow human beings.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mrs. Werthan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.